Institute Workshop: Nature-based Early Childhood Education
August 22-23, 2020

Curriculum

The Urban Ecology Center® offers over 20 years of experience in neighborhood transformation. It all starts with getting a city kid to explore their neighborhood park. Using the model of the Center and its cornerstone program the Neighborhood Environmental Education Project as the framework, UEC educator Matt Flower began a groundbreaking early childhood education program, bringing together the distinctive features of “urban,” “nature,” and “early childhood education.”

Day One: August 22
Demonstrating Best Practices in Nature-based Early Childhood (NbEC)

On the first day, we explore our unique outdoor classrooms located adjacent to each of the three branches of the Urban Ecology Center. These classrooms offer fun, educational opportunities that inspire curiosity while serving to accomplish early learning and developmental goals. By observing outdoor teaching techniques, we deconstruct outdoor exploration and practice aligning outdoor exploration to state and national standards.

• Urban Ecology Center Site Tours – Riverside Park, Menomonee Valley and Washington Park
• Naturalist Training – Interpreting the natural world for the early childhood ages
• Self-Evaluation – Understanding outdoor exploration
• Instructor Observation – Nature-based Early Childhood Techniques
• Aligning outdoor exploration to early childhood development and learning standards

Day Two: August 23
Urban Ecology Center’s Preschool Environmental Education Program (PEEP)

The second day will focus on demonstrating the concepts, approaches and educational materials used in our Preschool Environmental Educational Program (PEEP). Finally, we’ll practice developing indoor and outdoor, age appropriate, nature-based lessons that provide our youngest children with the skills and knowledge for their first steps in nature!

• Program Evaluation – Explore the Urban Ecology Center’s PEEP Program
• Explore using puppets and natural materials for vicarious and indirect experiences
• Designing Indoor and Outdoor NbEC Lessons
• Assessing nature-based early childhood experiences and interactions
• Embracing nature play and the child’s need for direct experiences in nature

Learn more & register at www.urbanecologycenter.org
or email institute@urbanecologycenter.org